

The Extent of Christ's Commis-
sion to Baptize.

A
S E R M O N
S H E W I N G

The Capacity of I N F A N T S
to Receive,

And the utter Incapacity of our
Dissenting Teachers
To Administer

Christian Baptism.

With a P R E F A C E to the *Dissenters.*

By T H O M A S B R E T T, L. L. D.
Rector of *Betteshanger* in *Kent.*

L O N D O N :

Printed by J. Matthews, for J O H N W Y A T at
the *Rose* in *St. Paul's Church Yard.* 1712.

Price 3 d.

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And the utter incapacity of our



Christian Bopst

Which is PREFERRED to the Disputes.

By THOMAS BRETTE, L.L.D.
Rector of Gillingham in Kent.

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THE PREFACE TO THE DISSENTERS.

Dearly Beloved,

MY hearty Desire and Prayer to God for you is, that you may be sav'd : For which Cause, I here Dedicate to you another Sermon, that I may, if possible, convince you, of the great Danger you have run your selves into, by your Separation from the *Episcopal Church*. I know the Clamours raised against me, for my former *Sermon* Dedicated to You : That I am called the *Tool of a Party*, and am set on, and encourag'd, not only to Unchurch you, but all the Foreign Reform'd Churches likewise ; That I am an inconsiderable senseless Fellow, and what I say, is not worth any Man's Notice ; That the Church of *England* allows the Baptism of *Dissenters* to be valid,

and no considerable Church-Men, have ever preach'd or taught the contrary.

Now as to my being the *Tool* of a *Party*, &c. I thank God, I can safely say, That I never made or preach'd a Sermon, for the sake of any *Party* whatsoever : Neither have I consider'd, whom my Discourses would please or displease, but only whether what I preached was agreeable to the Scriptures, and might tend to the Edification of my Hearers. That as to Unchurching the *Dissenters*, and the Foreign Reform'd Churches ; I am so far from having any such Purpose, that it is my most earnest Desire, they should all be united to the *True Catholick and Apostolick Church*. But if they have Unchurch'd themselves, by rejecting *Episcopacy*, and like *Jeroboam*, have made Priests for themselves, without any Commission from *Christ* ; am I to be blamed, for seeking to reduce them from this Dangerous Error, and endeavouring to persuade them to return to the **CHURCH** ?

As to my being an inconsiderable senseless Fellow, I hope wise Men will not consider who speaks, but what is spoken. Let who will say it, certainly it behoves you, for your Salvation depends upon it, to examine, whether the Doctrine be true or not : For if it be true, it matters not how insignificant the Person is that delivers it ; and if false, a Man of the greatest Authority, for Wisdom and Learning cannot make it true.

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As to the Opinion of our Church in this Matter, it is sufficiently declared in the *Rubrick for Private Baptism*, where it appoints no other to Baptize than the Lawful Minister, even in Cases of great *Cause and Necessity*: Consequently, that a Child should rather dye without *Baptism*, than receive it from a *Lay-Hand*. Which certainly would not have been so appointed, if the Church had been of Opinion, That *Lay-Baptism* was of any manner of Efficacy, and could be in the least-wise beneficial. For if *Lay-Baptism* be only irregular and not ineffectual, it is better certainly, That the Irregularity should be dispensed with, than that a Person should loose the Efficacy of the Sacrament. Our Church therefore, not allowing *Lay-Baptism*, even where no other can be had, plainly shews, That it is Her Opinion, That such *pretended Baptism* is of no Validity. If it be said, that notwithstanding this, the Church of *England* has always allowed the *Dissenters* Baptisms to be Valid, I desire to know by what *Canon, Rubrick, or Article* this is allowed? For it is nothing to the Purpose to say, That the Clergy of our Church, have generally admitted *Dissenters* to Communion, without requiring them to be baptized, by One *Episcopally* Ordained: For we are to learn the Sense of the Church from the Liturgy, Articles and Canons, and not from Common Practice. Whether any considerable Men of our Church,

Church, have preached against the Validity of *Lay-Baptism*, I cannot affirm, because I have had but little Opportunity to hear them preach, but I know that Mr. *Bennet*, and Mr. *Reeves*, (two as considerable Men, as any of the Parochial Clergy) have declar'd against the Validity of such pretended Baptism in Print, and I have Reason to believe, that some as considerable have done the same from the Pulpit.

The Doctrine contained, in the former Part of the following Discourse, is what I conceive all of you (except the *Quakers*, and those that call themselves *Baptists*) will approve; and treats of a Subject on which many Volumes have been written: But the latter part affects all the *Dissenters* in general, and has not, that I know of, been so often discussed. However, it is certainly a Matter of the greatest Moment, and therefore I conjure you to consider it seriously. For if the Doctrine be true, as in my Conscience, I am perfectly convinced that it is, all that have received; what they call *Baptism* from such *Dissenting Teachers*, as never had *Episcopal Ordination*, are in a very dangerous State, and ought as soon as possible to get themselves truly Baptiz'd in our Church. And if I should be mistaken, I suppose you do not want Men of Ability to confute me. But I must desire those who shall go about that Work, if any shall think fit to attempt it, That they will not expect I should regard

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guard whatever they can say of the Consequences of the Doctrine, and how many will be Unchurch'd by it; for should those Consequences necessarily follow from it, they cannot make it false, if the Foundation on which it is built be true.

Now the Foundation, on which the Doctrine contained in the latter Part of the following Sermon stands, are these Two Points. *First*, That a *Lay-Man* cannot Minister either of the Sacraments, instituted by *Jesus Christ*, therefore Baptism being a Sacrament, cannot be Ministred by a *Lay-Man*: This is the Doctrine contained in the Twenty Third Article of our Church, which if I mistake not, your Teachers themselves subscribe. It is also a Doctrine taught by the *Assembly of Divines*, (as they are called) both in their *Directory* and *Confession of Faith*. And I doubt not to be able, to make it appear, That the contrary Doctrine, as far as relates to the Sacrament of *Baptism*, is a mere *Popish* Doctrine. The other Point is. That whosoever is not *Episcopally* Ordained, is no more than a mere *Lay-Man*. This is certainly the Doctrine of Our Church, and was so of the whole Christian Church, for above 1500 Years. Whosoever therefore undertakes to confute me, and shall not invalidate one of these Premises, I shall not think any thing else he can say to be worth my Notice.

That

That GOD, in his Mercy, would be Graciously pleased to open your Eyes, and give you Grace, impartially to enquire into the Truth of this Doctrine, which is of such Moment, with Relation to your Eternal Welfare, is the hearty Prayer of

Your Faithful Friend,

and most Humble Servant

in Christ Jesus

Article of our Church, which if I mistake not, your Teachers themselves subscribe.

It is also a Doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures, (as they are called) in their Diversity and Confession of Faith. And I doubt not to be able to make it appear, that the contrary Doctrine, as far as respects the Doctrine of Baptism, is a mere Popish Doctrine. The other Point is, that whosoever is not Episcopally Ordained, is no more than a mere Layman. This is certainly the Doctrine of our Church, and was so of the whole Christian Church, for above 1500 Years. Who-

soever therefore undertakes to dispute me, and shall not invalidate one of these Principles, I shall not think any thing else he can say to be worth my Notice.

THE B. O. B.

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That

*The Extent of CHRIST'S
Commission to Baptize.*

MAT. XXVIII. 19.

*Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations,
baptizing them in the Name of the
Father, and of the Son, and of the
Holy Ghost.*

THES E Words contain that Commis-
sion, which our Saviour, a little before
his Ascension into Heaven, gave to
his Disciples, in order to Authorize them to
encrease and enlarge his Church, by the Solemn
Admission of new Members into it, after a par-
ticular Form and Manner which he here pre-
scribes to them. The Text it self is well known
and remember'd by most Persons, but I am
afraid is not so well observed, and understood
as it ought to be. It is very frequent in the
Mouths of a particular Sect of Men, who mis-
understand and misapply it, as if it plainly
tended to make Infants incapable of Baptism.
It is also, I am afraid, not sufficiently observ'd
by many, with relation to the Persons, to
whom this Commission is granted.

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The Extent of

All Sects and Parties, except the *Quakers*, seem sensible, that Baptism is hereby made a perpetual Sacrament, or Divine Institution, ordained by *Christ* himself for the Admission of Members into his Church ; but all do not seem sufficiently sensible, who are the Persons to whom this Authority is given, to admit Members into the Body of *Christ*, but are apt to think, if a Person is baptiz'd, it matters not by whom that Ordinance is administred : That altho' for Order sake, it may be most fit and proper to have it performed, by such as are set apart for Holy Functions and Ministrations, yet, if the Thing be done by any other Person, it is nevertheless valid, and that the Baptism is good, and the Person who has receiv'd it from the Hands even of a meer Layman, is as good a Christian, and as much a Member of the Church, as he that has received it from a Priest.

I shall therefore in the following Discourse, endeavour to establish these Two Points,

or *First*, That there is nothing in this Text, which tends to make Infants incapable of, or unqualify'd for, Baptism, but the contrary: And *Secondly*, That it is no indifferent Matter by whom any Person is baptiz'd, because *Christ* in these Words has plainly authoriz'd a particular Order of Men, to perform this Office.

I. *First* then, There is nothing in this Text, which tends to make Infants incapable of, or unqualify'd for Baptism, but the contrary. There is a well known Sect, which call themselves *Baptists*, as if they were the only truly baptiz'd Christians, and that no others besides have any true Baptism amongst them : They

love

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love to call themselves *Baptized Believers*, as if none but *They*, notwithstanding they are *Believers*, could claim the Grace and Benefits of Baptism. But let them assume what Name or Appellation they please, and pride themselves with a vain Boast, I am firmly perswaded, and doubt not to prove it also, that they are neither true *Believers*, nor yet truly baptiz'd. This is the Sect which denies Baptism to Infants, and pretends to prove from this Text, That such are neither qualify'd for, nor capable of Baptism. They tell us, That the Words are, *Teach all Nations, baptizing them*, therefore say they, *It is necessary that all Persons should be taught before they are baptiz'd, but Infants are unqualify'd for Teaching, and uncapable of it, consequently they are unqualify'd for and uncapable of Baptism*. It is true, the Words in our English Bibles are, *Teach all Nations, baptizing them*: But the Holy Evangelist, who wrote by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, did not write his Book in our Language, and therefore, if our Translators have not in this Place, given us the true Sense of the Original, we ought not to build any Doctrine upon that, which they have plainly misinterpreted. And therefore by the way, I must give you a Caution, that you be very careful that you be not led away into new Notions or Opinions, contrary to the receiv'd Doctrine of our Church, because you may be shew'd some particular Text of Scripture, which as it lyes in our common Bibles, may seem opposite to it: But in all such Cases have recourse to your Pastors, who understand the Original Language, and be first satisfy'd by them, that the Words are rightly and truly translated, and that you have a right Notion and Understanding of them: Our Translation, God be prais'd, is generally

very good, and may for the most part be depended on, but not in all Cases, and therefore when Scruples arise about any particular Passage, it is necessary to have Recourse to the Original.

In the Text now under our Consideration.

There is clearly a Mistake in our Translation, and it should not be said, *Teach all Nations*, but *Disciple all Nations, baptizing them*: That is, *gather Disciples out of all Nations by Baptism*, or make

† Note, That these very Words [make Disciples or Christians] are the Marginal Reading in our most Authentick English Bibles.

† Disciples or Christians of all Nations by baptizing them. Now a Disciple is a Learner, a Person put under the Discipline and Instruction of another, to be taught, directed, and guided by him, and such as He shall depute for that Purpose. Therefore, when our Saviour gave his Apostles Commandment, *To Disciple all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, He thereby plainly required of them, that they should make use of the Ceremony of Baptism, to admit Scholars or Learners into the School of Christ, and thereby to put them under the Discipline, Instruction, and Guidance, of the Three Persons in the Blessed Trinity, *God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost*, to be Taught and Directed by these Three Persons and one God, and to be obedient to him in all Things, as Scholars or Learners to their Master. And being thus admitted into the School of Christ, then they are to be instructed and taught such Things, as are proper for them to observe and do. For which Reason our Lord adds, in the Words following the Text, another Precept for the Instruction of those that are thus made Disciples, *Teaching them, says he, to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

Now

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Now a Child, an Infant, may be admitted under the Care, and Conduct of a Master, even from the Womb, if any Master will be so kind as to take him into his House or Family so young. And this Christ has shew'd himself to be ready and willing to do: For we read in the Gospel, That *they brought young Children to him, that he should touch them, and his Disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, suffer the little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not: For of such is the Kingdom of God.* This is a very plain Evidence, that Christ is willing to take Infants, or young Children into his own immediate Care and Protection; to have them dedicated to him, brought into his House or Family the Church, which he usually in the Gospel, calls by the Name of the Kingdom of Heaven. Shall we say then, that they are unqualify'd, or uncapable to be made his Disciples, when he has so plainly told us, That his Family, Church or Kingdom belongs to such as are so qualify'd?

Mar. x.
13.

Again, when any Person is admitted into a School to be a Disciple, Scholar or Learner in that Place, either he himself (if he be of Years of Discretion capable to do it) or his Parents, or Guardians in his Name, (if he be under Years of Discretion) must Covenant with the Master on this Occasion. And if the Covenant is intended to be binding and strong, and to tye both Parties to the Performance of it for a certain Term, as is the Case of Apprentices, who are put out and bound for several Years, the Covenant, Contract or Agreement must be Sign'd and Sealed. The Disciple or Apprentice engages to be Dutiful and Obedient to his Master, and the Master engages to main-

maintain, and make all due and proper Provision for the *Apprentice* or *Disciple*, and to instruct and teach him the Mysteries of his Profession. And tho' the Person thus bound be under Years of Discretion, he is nevertheless a *Scholar*, *Disciple* or *Apprentice* to his Master, and they are both bound to perform the Conditions of the Covenant, so far as they are capable of doing it. The *Disciple* or *Apprentice* is bound to be Dutiful and Obedient to his Master, so far as he is able, and the Master to provide for, maintain, and instruct him, so far as he is capable of Learning. And the Case is the same, whether the Contract were made by the Disciple or Apprentice himself immediately, or by others in his Name.

It is plain therefore, That Infants or Children under Years of Discretion, are not unqualify'd or incapable of being made Disciples, that is Scholars, Learners or Apprentices. Since the Contract or Covenant which makes a Disciple, may be, and usually is made, not directly and immediately by the Disciple, Learner or Apprentice himself, but by others in his Name. When our Blessed Saviour then gave his Apostles Commandment, To *make all Nations Disciples*, that is, to *make all People his Scholars or Apprentices*, to covenant with them that they should be Dutiful, and Obedient to him; and that then he would take them into his Church, Family or Kingdom; provide for them, maintain them, and instruct them in those Holy Mysteries, which shall qualify them to enjoy that Eternal Happiness, which he has prepared for them, and to Seal this Covenant by Baptizing them; And then to *teach them all things whatsoever he had commanded*: He very plainly shew'd, that he by no Means intended

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to exclude Infants from this Blessing. Because, Infants are no less capable, of being put under the Care and Conduct of a Master, to be Disciplin'd and Instructed by him, as they should become capable of Learning, than Persons of Riper Years. Nay, if we believe our Lord himself, Little Children are indeed naturally better qualify'd, to be made his Disciples than Elder Persons: For, before Persons of Riper Years can be qualify'd, to enter into his Discipleship into his Church, or the Kingdom of God, they must take Pains to make themselves what Children are by Nature. *Verily I say unto you, says Christ, Except ye be converted and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore, shall humble himself as this little Child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.* You see therefore, even in our Saviours own Opinion, that Children have one Qualification for Discipleship; which elder Persons naturally have not, and that is *Humility*.

Matth.
xviii. 3.

This Virtue of *Humility* is absolutely necessary for a Disciple. For, it behoves a Learner to be sensible of his own Ignorance and want of Understanding, in those Things wherein he desires to be instructed: For, if he judges himself to be as Wise as his Master, he will have no Regard to his Masters Instructions: He will Dispute and Argue against his Doctrines, and examine the Reasonableness of his Commands, before he will be prevail'd with to obey them. This is certainly very unbecoming a Disciple: A Master will soon be weary of that Scholar, that thinks he is wiser than himself, and regards not his Instructions; or of that Servant, who will continually dispute, and argue, against the Reasonableness of his Commands. So Christ cannot approve of such Disciples,

ciples, as will not believe his Doctrines or obey his Commands, unless they be such, as they by their own Natural Understanding judge to be reasonable. For his Doctrines are some of them Mysterious, beyond the Capacity of Human Understanding: And his Precepts are many of them harsh, and severe, disagreeable to the Constitution of Flesh and Blood, in their mere Natural Capacity. And therefore Children, or those who humble themselves as Children, and rely not, on their own Knowledge and Understanding, so much as to bring it into any Competition, with that of their Master, are, according to Our Saviour's own Declaration, most capable, and best qualify'd to be his Disciples: *Of such, says he, is the Kingdom of Heaven*: That is, his Disciples, for whom the Kingdom of Heaven is prepared, must be qualify'd with that Humility and Submission to *Christ*, which Children naturally shew to their Governours and Instructors. And if Children are thus naturally qualify'd to submit and obey, which is the proper Accomplishment or Qualification of a Disciple, even according to our Saviours own Doctrine, shall we say, that they are unqualify'd to be made *Christ's* Disciples?

But it is objected, that notwithstanding all this, it is very evident, That the Apostles, to whom this Commission was given, required *Faith* and *Repentance* in those whom they baptized. That *St. Peter* in his First Sermon, after the Descent of the *Holy Ghost*, says, *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ. Then they that gladly receiv'd his Word were baptiz'd.* That when the *Eunuch* desired to be baptiz'd, *Philip* said, *If thou believest with all thine Heart thou may'st.* And he answered and said, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* And then

Act. ii.
38. 41.

Act. viii.
37.

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Philip baptiz'd him. With several other like Instances. It is also said, that this is the Doctrine of the *Church of England*; for when it is asked in the Church Catechism, *What is required of Persons to be baptiz'd?* The Answer appointed to be given to that Question is, *Repentance whereby they forsake Sin, and Faith whereby they stedfastly believe the Promises of God, made to them in that Sacrament.* So that, both according to the Scriptures, and the Doctrine of the *Church of England* agreeable to the Scriptures, both *Faith* and *Repentance* are plainly requir'd in Persons to be baptiz'd. Consequently that *Infants* who cannot *Repent* and *Believe*, ought not to be baptiz'd.

In Answer to which, it is to be observ'd, that every Disciple should be at Peace with his Master, because, if there be any Enmity between the Scholar and Master, it will be a great Obstruction to the Discharge of those Duties, which the Scholar owes to his Master, and of those Benefits which he should receive from him. Now our Sins set us at Enmity with God, and all Persons who live to Years of Discretion, commit such Sins as to provoke God to that Degree, That we may be well assured, he will not receive them to be his Disciples, without Repentance and Promises of Amendment. Therefore, when Persons of Riper Years are to be baptiz'd, it is necessary that Repentance be requir'd of them, in order to their being made *Disciples of Christ*. But Infants have no such Sins to repent of, as all Persons of riper Years have; They neither are, or can be guilty of any actual Transgressions. There is nothing in them, besides the Original Corruption of Nature, which we bring into the World with us, that can be in the least offensive to God: And their Innocence as to all Actual Sin, plainly
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gives them as good a Title to the Grace of Reconciliation, as the Repentance of another Person. And therefore the Apostles requiring Repentance from those grown Persons they baptiz'd, is no Argument, that Infants are to be excluded from that Sacrament, because they cannot Repent: For as they cannot repent, so neither can they sin, which is the only thing that makes Repentance necessary. And he that is innocent or free from actual Sin, is certainly in as good a Case, as he that has committed Sin and repented of it. Would not any of you be at least as well pleased with, and as willing to shew Kindness to, a Man that never offended you, as to one that had offended and begg'd your Pardon?

Again, the Apostles indeed required, that Grown Persons, whom they baptiz'd, should believe and make Profession of their Faith: And it is freely granted, that this also was necessary. If a Grown Person, think it convenient to become a Disciple to any Man, that is, to put himself to School to him, or to be his Apprentice; it is certain, that he must believe that Man, to be both able and willing to teach, and instruct him, in that Profession he desires to learn, that he may obtain a comfortable Subsistence by it. But this hinders not, but that a Child may be put under the Care, and Tuition, of the same Master, though he himself neither knows or believes any thing, for want of proper Capacities: And in this Case, the Belief of the Parent, Guardian or other Person, who puts him under the Care of that Master, is plainly sufficient: And if the Child does believe as he grows up, and comes to Years of better Understanding, that his Master is both able and willing to instruct him,

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in the Profession he is desirous to learn, that he may have a comfortable Subsistence by it, 'tis enough. And yet after he comes to profess and be satisfy'd in this Belief, he is no more a Disciple, no more a Scholar or Apprentice than he was before. So, when one that is at Years of Discretion, would be made a Disciple of *Christ* by Baptism, it is necessary that he have Faith in the Holy Trinity, the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*, in whose Name he is to be baptiz'd, and to whom he is to be made a Disciple. That he should believe, that *Christ* is the *Way*, the *Truth* and the *Life*, That he will instruct him in the Way of Life, that in his School the Church, he shall learn that Holy Profession, which shall afford him not only a Comfortable, but a Glorious and Blessed Subsistence, a most desirable and happy Life to all Eternity, a Life and Livelihood that shall never have End. But this hinders not, but that a Child may be made a Disciple of *Christ*, and be put under his Care and Tuition, tho' it cannot actually have, or make Profession of this Faith at the very time of Admission into his School or Church. In this Case, as in the former, between Man and Man, the Belief or Faith, of those who bring him to be made a Disciple, and to put him into the School of *Christ*, and who promise Faith and Repentance in the Childs Name, is sufficient. And 'tis enough, that the Child have, and make outward Profession of, this Faith and Repentance, as he grows up and comes to Years of better Understanding.

As therefore our Church, acknowledges *Faith* and *Repentance* to be required in Persons to be baptiz'd, yet she nevertheless enjoyns the Baptism of Infants, and gives this Reason

for it, *because they promise them both*, That is, both Faith and Repentance, *by their Sureties, which Promise when they come to Age, themselves are bound to perform.* For, as Children may be put under the Care of a Guardian, Master, or Tutor, before they are capable of learning from him, or being instructed by him; yet, as they grow up, and become capable of learning, they are bound to be taught and govern'd by him; and to perform those Covenants, which those that put them under such Guardianship and Tuition, contracted and promised in their Names; so, when Infants are made Disciples of *Christ*, they are put under his Guardianship and Tuition, by their Sureties, whom we call *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*, who Promise and Vow in the Child's Name, and then as the Child grows up, and becomes capable of Performing the Duties of such a Disciple, he is bound to do, what his Sureties promised in his Name. And if he fails to do it, he forfeits his Right to those Blessings, and to that Inheritance which *Christ* has purchas'd for him, and which belong to all those Disciples, which perform the Duties of the Covenant.

Gen. xvii.
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12.

14.

Deut.
xxix. 10.
11. 12.

Now, that Children may enter into Covenant with God, is evident from the Scriptures, because the *Jewish* Children were so entred by Circumcision: For God said to *Abraham* when he Covenanted with him, *This is my Covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy Seed after thee; every Man-Child among you shall be circumcised. And he that is eight Days old shall be circumcised among you. And the uncircumcised Man Child shall be cut off from his People: He hath broken my Covenant.* Also *Moses* says, *Ye stand this Day all of you before the Lord your God,*
you

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you and your little ones : *That thou shouldst enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God.*

Since then it is so evident, both from the Reason and Nature of the Thing, and from the Scriptures also, That Children are capable of being entred into the Covenant of Discipleship with God, and our Saviour commanded to *make all Nations Disciples*, without the least Intimation, that Infants should be excluded ; it is manifest, that there is nothing in this Text, which tends to make Infants incapable of, or unqualify'd for Baptism, but the direct contrary : And this very Text, not only permits, but plainly obliges us to admit Infants into *Christ's Church* by Baptism.

Therefore let me intreat you, that you be not led away, or seduced by such as are *un-learned and unstable*, who *wrest the Scriptures to their own Destruction*, who falsely apply a wrong Translation of this Text, to countenance and support their own Dreams and Fancies, *Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*. They consider not, that Baptism is a Grace or Favour of God, by which we are made his Chosen or Adopted Children, and that Infants are as capable of being made Children of God, as elder Persons, because, they are as capable of his Favour or Grace. They will not observe the Order prescrib'd by our Saviour, when he commanded all Nations to be made his Disciples. That they were first to be *made Disciples* by Baptism, and then to be *taught all things whatsoever he had commanded*. That the Apostles also proceeded in this manner. That the very first Day they publish'd the glad Tydings of the Gospel, they baptiz'd *three thousand Souls*. That it was not possible that so many Persons, could in that time be instructed
in

2 Pet. iii.
16.

Mat. xv.
9.

Act. ii.
41.

in all the Duties of the Christian Religion, and consequently, that many, not to say most of the Doctrines of Christianity, were taught them afterwards. It is therefore evident, that they were only then admitted into the School of *Christ*, in order to their Instruction. And are not Children capable of being thus admitted? Cannot they, as well as elder Persons, be entred into the School or Discipleship of *Christ*, in order to learn as soon as they are capable, what is the Duty of a Christian? They may undoubtedly; And being so admitted, do belong to the School or Church of *Christ*, and are no less his Disciples, than the most wise and knowing Christians. Since therefore your Children are capable of the Grace of Baptism, as I trust, I have convinc'd you that they are; I hope you will not need any Arguments, to perswade you to bring them to receive this Sacrament in their Infancy: Because, if it be a Privilege or Advantage, as undoubtedly it is a very great one, to be made a Disciple of *Christ*: you ought as soon as possible, to procure this Privilege for them, for if they dye without it, we have no Promise to rely upon for their Salvation. I will therefore now proceed to shew you,

II. Secondly, That it is no indifferent Matter, by whom any Person is baptiz'd, because, *Christ* in the Words of the Text, has plainly Authoriz'd a particular Order of Men to perform this Office. The Words of the Text are, Go YE therefore and Disciple all Nations, baptizing them. The Word *ye*, plainly denotes the Persons he was then speaking to, and unto whom He gave this Commission to baptize. And it is evident from the Context, that the Per-

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Persons he here Authorizes or Commissions for this Office, were, not the whole Body of his Disciples, but a select Number of them, which he had chosen out of the rest, to whom he committed that Power and Authority which was given to himself. For, our Lords Disciples, were at the time of the Resurrection above Five Hundred, as we learn from St. Paul who tells us, That after his Resurrection and before his Ascension, *He was seen of above Five Hundred Brethren at once.* And yet but Eleven of these were by this Commission Authoriz'd to Baptize. This we learn, a few Verses before the Text, *Then the Eleven Disciples went away into Galilee, into a Mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All Power is given unto me both in Heaven and in Earth. Go YE therefore and Disciple all Nations, baptizing them, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* It is evident from this Place, That our Saviour did not give this Commission or Authority at large to all his Disciples, but only to these Eleven. For he did not meet them by Accident, but by Appointment: And if he had intended to have Authoriz'd more at this time, he would have ordered more to have met him at this Mountain in Galilee. Also he did not say to them, *Do you and the rest of your Brethren, go and Disciple all Nations,* but, *Go ye,* that is, *Ye to whom I now speak, Ye whom I appointed to meet me here, that I might confer such Authority upon you, Go ye and Disciple all Nations, baptizing them.* This is a plain particular Separation of them, for this Work and Office, exclusive of all others. For if Christ had design'd to have empowered all his Disciples in general, to have admitted others into his Church, he would not have

1 Cor. xv. 6.

2 Tim. ii.
3, 4.

have selected Eleven of them on this Occasion, without taking any notice of the rest.

Consider that we are the *Soldiers of Jesus Christ*, and he has chosen every good Christian to be a *Soldier*. Now every Soldier must be Lifted into the Service of his General or Sovereign, by such Person as has receiv'd a Commission from the Sovereign so to lift him. And no Person can Lift any into the Service of the Sovereign, but those who have received a Commission so to do. And the Sovereign by granting such Commissions, evidently excludes all that are uncommission'd, from meddling in this Matter. Now *Christ* is the Sovereign of the Church, *All Power is given unto him, both in Heaven and in Earth*: And God gave him to be the

Eph. i. 22. *Head over all Things to the Church*. Whoever therefore is admitted into the Church, whosoever is Lifted under his Banner, to be his faithful Soldier and Servant, as we all are by Baptism, must be admitted or lifted by such as have received a Commission from him for that Purpose. It appears from the Text, that *Christ* did grant a Commission to Eleven Persons, to admit Members into his Church by Baptism, and to no more at that time. Therefore all others were evidently excluded from meddling in this Matter: Because, the very Granting a Commission, manifestly proves, that those which are Uncommission'd, have no Authority or Power, to act in that Business, for which the Commission is granted. For if they had, there would be no need of granting such a Commission. And *Christ* by making Choice of these Eleven out of above Five Hundred, evidently shewed, that he never intended that the Business which he Authoriz'd them to do, should be perform'd by every one, that would

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take upon him to execute it. As therefore a Man, who should be Lifted into the Service of his Sovereign, by one who has received no Commission or Authority from the Sovereign to Lift him, would not be truly and properly a Soldier, how much soever he might think himself to be one, and both the Person *Lifting*, and the Person *Lifted* after that Manner, might justly incur the High Displeasure of the Sovereign for such Contempt of his Authority and Mockery of his Commission; so, a Man baptiz'd by one that has received no Commission from *Christ* to make Disciples, or to Lift Soldiers into his Service, cannot be truly and properly a Disciple of *Christ*, and both the *Baptizer* and *Baptized* after that manner, may have just Cause to fear our Lords High Displeasure, for this Contempt of his Authority, and Mockery of his Commission.

Again, *Baptism* is no part of Natural Religion, it is a *Positive* Institution ordained by *Christ* himself, and therefore no Man can have a Natural Right to the Ministration of it; The Power to administer it must be *Positive*, and can belong to none but only such as *Christ* has, or shall authorize by the Institution. Now it is evident, from the Text, compared with some other Portions of Scripture, I have already cited, that out of above Five Hundred Brethren or Disciples, *Christ* made choice of but eleven, to whom he gave Power to put in Practice this Institution; he selected those from the rest, appointed them to meet him by themselves without any other Company, and then committed to their Charge, the Making or Admission of more Disciples into his Church out of all Nations. He shewed himself to all the rest of

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his Disciples after his Resurrection, and freely conversed with them; but when he appointed the Sacrament of Baptism, for the Admission of all Nations into Discipleship, he chose only Eleven out of the rest, to whom he committed that Dispensation. The Persons therefore, by whom Baptism is to be administered, are plainly as positive a Part of the Institution, as any thing else relating to that Ordinance. If *Christ* had had but Eleven Disciples at this time, when he commanded them to *Disciple all Nations baptizing them*, we might have concluded, That whosoever was a Disciple of *Christ*, might have made other Disciples, by Ministering this Sacrament to them: But whereas, he had above Five Hundred Disciples, and yet at this time thought fit to authorize but Eleven of them, to be the Ministers of Baptism, it is plain, that a Man's being himself a Disciple, gives him no Authority, to make any other Person so by Baptism.

We may also further consider, That Baptism is a Seal of a Contract or Covenant between God and the Person to be baptiz'd. The Person to be baptiz'd, promises by himself, or by others in his Name, *That he will renounce the Devil and all his Works, and constantly believe God's holy Word, and obediently keep his Commandments*: God also promises on his Part, *That he will vouchsafe to receive him, to release him of his Sins, to sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, to give him the Kingdom of Heaven and Everlasting Life*. Now, though a Parent or Guardian may contract for a Minor, who is unable to contract for himself, in Matters which shall be for the apparent Advantage of his Minor, without any Deputation from his Child or his Ward, to enable him to make such a Contract, yet, it would

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be highly presumptuous in any Man to pretend to contract for his Superior, without a Deputation from him to do so. Or, will any Superior think himself bound by such a Contract? It must therefore be the highest Presumption imaginable, for a Man to pretend to make a Contract for God, or in his Name, who has never receiv'd any Deputation from him for that Purpose: Nor do God's Promises in any wise, bind him to perform the Conditions of a Covenant made him in his Name, by one whom he has not Authoriz'd, or Deputed to Covenant for him. Where God gives a Man a Commission, or Authority to Covenant in his Name, and to bind the Contract by a particular Seal or Institution; there is no doubt can be made, but he will stand to the Terms of the Covenant, and perform his Part faithfully: But, if a Man takes upon him to make, and seal such a Covenant in God's Name, who is not Commission'd by him to do so, we have no Grounds to think, God is bound, or ty'd to ratify any Part of such pretended Covenant, since the Person that made it, had no Authority to Act in his Name. And such a Covenant, though *ungroundedly presumed to be* sealed and ratify'd, with the Form of Baptism, must be null and void in it self.

The short of the Matter is this, *Baptism is a Positive Institution or Sacrament, ordain'd by Christ himself, for the Admission of Disciples into his Church, or Soldiers into his Service, who are continually to fight against his and our Enemies, the World, the Flesh and the Devil, and He gave a Commission to certain Chosen Persons, not to all his Disciples, to admit all Nations into this Service or Warfare, that is, all Persons in all Nations, that were willing and ready to come into his*

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Service: And they were to Contract or Covenant with them for this Purpose, in the Name of the Three Persons in the Blessed Trinity, *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, and to seal this Covenant by the Sacrament of Baptism. But such as had not this Commission given them, had plainly no Authority to admit any into the Church, to make a Contract with them in the Name of the Blessed Trinity, or to seal this Covenant by the Ministration of the Sacrament of Baptism. All they should do in this Case, would plainly be null and void. That a private Soldier has as much Authority, to Lift another into the Service of his Prince, as a private Christian can have, to admit a Member into *Christ's Church*. That a Commission is absolutely necessary in this Case, to make the Baptism valid and effectual. For, who shall make a Covenant, and Seal it in God's Name, who has received no Authority or Deputation from him to do so?

It may now, and that reasonably too, be ask'd, how shall we at this time know, who are the Persons that are Authoriz'd, Deputed, or Commission'd by *Christ*, to Minister this Sacrament of *Baptism*? *Christ* did indeed, as appears from the Context, authorize Eleven Disciples for this Purpose, exclusive, as you say, of all others; yet we find by the Scriptures, that several others did Minister this Sacrament; and you your self also, with others of your Profession, administer it to this Day. How does it appear, that either they or you have any Commission for this Ministry, more than any other Christian? Whence do you derive your Authority? This I confess is a Pertinent Question, and I shall endeavour to answer it, and hope I shall do it to your Satisfaction.

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In order to this, I will shew you, who these Eleven Disciples were, what Authority they had, and how it was derived from them to others. We read therefore in the Gospel, That out of his Disciples, which as I have shewed you, were in all above Five Hundred, *He chose Twelve, whom he also named Apostles.* One of these which was Judas Iscariot, betray'd him, and then *hang'd himself* before our Saviour's Crucifixion; so that when our Lord arose from the Dead, there remained but Eleven of these Apostles, and to them it was, that he gave this Commission to baptize. But this was not all the Authority he gave them, for *he sent them even as he was sent by the Father.* They had therefore Authority to give Commission to others, even as he had given to them: And accordingly we find, that they did so, and ordained Elders, that is, Priests or Presbyters in every Church. And because their own time was but short in this World, and yet the Church, and the Sacraments, and Ordinances appertaining to it, were to continue to all Generations; they also vested others, who are called Bishops, to give Commissions as they had done, and to *ordain Elders in every City.* For though the Apostles were not intended to continue beyond that Generation, yet it is evident, our Saviour design'd his Commission should continue as long as the Earth shall stand, therefore at the granting of it, he promises to be *with them always, even unto the end of the World.* Not with the Apostles themselves only, for they have been all dead many Hundreds of Years: but with them and their Successors, *even to the end of the World.*

Luk. vi. 13.

Mat. xxvii. 5.

Joh. xx. 21.

Act. xiv. 23.

Tit. i. 5.

Now,

Act. viii.
5, 12.

Compare
1 Tim. v.
22. with
Act. xx.
17, 28.

1 Tim. i.
3.

Now, tho' *Presbyters* or *Priests*, and *Deacons* also, as appears from the Scriptures, received Commission from the Apostles to preach and baptize; yet it appears also from the same Scriptures, as well as the continued Practice of the Church, that only *Bishops* can give a Commission or Ordain. For tho' there were several *Elders* or *Presbyters* in the Church of *Ephesus*, who were *Overseers*, to feed the Church of God, yet St. Paul placed *Timothy* there, to guide and govern them, and to Ordain others as there should be Occasion.

In the Church of *England* therefore, the only Church in this Realm, which has preserv'd the *Apostolical* Succession of *Bishops*, you may find Persons duly authoriz'd or commission'd to baptize. The *Priests* and *Deacons* of this Church have receiv'd a Commission from the Apostles Successors, (who derive their Authority by a Spiritual Generation from the Apostles and *Christ* himself) to baptize and perform other Ministerial Offices amongst you. But this Succession and this Commission is not to be found amongst any Sect of *Dissenters* whatsoever. And we can safely defy them all, of what Denomination or Perswasion soever they be, to prove that they have any Call or Commission, either to baptize or perform any other Ministerial Office.

They may perhaps, some of them pretend to an inward Call or Commission, and talk of secret private Workings of the Spirit upon them: But this is not a Call or Commission Warranted by the Scriptures. The Apostles were not so called, but *Christ* called and chose them publickly out of the rest of the Disciples, and gave them Authority

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city by an audible Voice, and so sent them, as he was sent by the Father, who likewise called and authorized him for the Work of the Ministry, by a Voice from Heaven, and from that time Jesus began to preach. So that it is evident, both Christ and his Apostles had an outward Call to the Ministry. And the Apostles also outwardly, by Imposition of Hands, Ordained others to the Ministerial Office. So that this inward Call, so much pretended to by some, has not the least Foundation or Authority from Scripture to warrant it.

Mat. iii. 17.

—iv. 17.

Act. vi. 6.

Others, perhaps will pretend, that they have this Outward Call or Commission, which is warranted by the Scriptures, and that they have been solemnly Ordained to the Ministerial Office. But then the Question is, by whom were they Ordained? For, if they were Ordained by such, as had no Authority to give them Orders, it is the same as if they were not Ordained at all. If they say, they were Ordained by *Presbyters*, (or such as call themselves so at least) Let them shew from the Scriptures, or the Practice of the Pure Primitive Church, or of the whole *Catholick Church* for 1500 Years, or from the Practice of any *Heretical* or *Schismatical* Church during that Time, that ever *Presbyters* were thought capable of giving Orders: If they can give one Instance, of any Ordination, without being performed by a Bishop, that was ever allowed of by the Church, to be good and valid, from our Saviour's Time, to the Time of *JOHN CALVIN*, I will yield up the Cause. But if no such Instance can be brought forth, as I am very well

well assured none can, Then it is evident, that such as are Ordained by *Presbyters* (or by those that pretend to be so) have no Orders or Commission at all, and all their Ministerial Acts are invalid. They are Usurpers of the Sacred Office, their Washing, though they call it *Baptism*, is no *Baptism*; their Preaching is of no Authority, and their pretending to Administer the Lords Supper, is a most Abominable Affront to that Sacred Ordinance. And those who expect, that themselves or their Children, should be made true Members of *Christ*, by their pretended Baptism, or to be truly edify'd and benefitted by their preaching, or to be Partakers of the Body and Blood of *Christ* by their pretended Administration of the Lords Supper, are most shamefully abused, and most scandalously imposed upon.

And for those who pride themselves, with the Name of *Baptiz'd Believers*, as I said at the Beginning of this Discourse, notwithstanding this their vain Boast, they are neither *Baptized*, nor many of them *Believers*. For, notwithstanding they have been plunged over Head in the Waters; they cannot be said to be baptized, since those that so undertake to plunge them into the Water, have no Commission or Authority to baptize: And consequently this Dipping can be no true Baptism. Then, that they are not many of them *Believers*, is evident, from the Heterodox, Heretical Opinions, which many of them hold, with Relation to the Trinity and Divinity of our Saviour.

Consider then, into what an unhappy Condition, those Persons run themselves, who
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for sake the Communion of the Establish'd Church : And how they most unhappily deprive themselves of that Benefit, which they might and should receive, from the Sacred Institutions and Ordinances of our Blessed Saviour. As our Saviour instituted Holy Sacraments, as Seals of that Covenant, he made with God for Mankind; as he appointed them for the Benefit of every Member of his Body, and made them generally necessary to the Salvation of every Christian, so necessary, that no Man who has Opportunity to receive them can be sav'd, if he wilfully neglects them; so, he appointed proper Officers to Administer these Sacraments, and by such particular appointment of some, plainly excluded all others from doing it. How then can they hope to be sav'd, who neglect to receive these Holy Sacraments, from those that have a Divine Authority to Administer them? A Thing, now generally practis'd by all Parties of *Dissenters*, of what Denomination soever. They most of them indeed own the Necessity of these Sacraments, but are not duly careful to consider, from whom they ought to receive them. Whereas, it is evident, That if they are not Ministred by such as are Commission'd, according to *Christ's* Ordinance for that Purpose, they are not the Sacraments of *Christ*, who no less appointed who should Minister them, than he appointed or instituted the Sacraments themselves. Those therefore, who wilfully run from the *Establish'd Church*, and seek Baptism for themselves or their Children, amongst any Sect of *Dissenters*, do indeed wilfully deprive themselves of all the Benefits of Baptism. They think they re-

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ceive

believe this Sacrament, but it is from those who have no Right to Administer it, and consequently receive not the Sacrament it self, but the Profanation of that Holy Myſtery. And if this Sacrament be generally neceſſary to Salvation, as it certainly is, I ſee not how they can be ſaved, according to the Revealed Will of God. All the hopes we can have for them, muſt be drawn from Gods Uncovenanted Mercies: And how far thoſe may be ſaved by them, who put ſuch a ſlight upon his Covenant, I cannot determine. 'Tis poſſible, he may make large Allowances to the Prejudices of an unhappy Education, but he has made no Promiſes in this Caſe, and therefore we cannot ſay directly, that he will do ſo. For, we can make no Promiſes for God, but only acquaint Men with what he has actually promiſed. We find no Promiſe made to an unbaptiz'd Perſon, nor have we any Ground from Scripture to ſay, That Baptiſm is valid, when performed by one who has received no Commiſſion to Baptize, which Commiſſion it is certain, none of our *Differents* have.

Mar. xvi.
16.

Whoſoever therefore leaves the Church of England, and runs over to any Party of *Differents*, and ſeeks to receive this Sacrament of Baptiſm at their Hands, to ſay no worſe, puts his Salvation to a very great Hazard; and indeed, has no Grounds to expect it from any of the Promiſes of God. For though there is a faithful Promiſe, That *He that believeth and is baptiz'd ſhall be ſaved*, yet, there is no Promiſe to the *Unbaptiz'd*, tho' he be a Believer; Neither can thoſe be ſaid to be truly baptiz'd, who are baptiz'd by ſuch as have no Authority, no Commiſſion, to Adminiſter that Sacrament.

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Since then, all that seek to receive Baptism amongst the *Dissenters*, run such an apparent Hazard of their Salvation, receiving indeed no Baptism at all: I hope I shall not need many Words, to persuade you to avoid the Communion of such Persons, that you be not led or seduced by them into Errors, which may prove of such fatal Consequence, to your own, and your Children's Eternal Welfare. As therefore you would secure to your selves, an Everlasting Life of Happiness in Heaven: Let me entreat you, to continue Firm and Stedfast in the Communion of the *Establish'd CHURCH*; and my Soul for yours, if your Life be agreeable to that Communion. Let your Practice be conformable to your Baptismal Covenant, which you made in our *CHURCH*, and after this Life ended, you will undoubtedly be made Partakers of an Inheritance with the Saints in Light, through the Merits of *Jesus Christ* our Saviour.

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